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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany
 SUBJECT Planned Airfield Construction near Gotha

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1. A new large scale construction project near Gotha, referred to as Object No 541, was one of the subjects discussed during a conference at the Bauunion Sued in Dresden between 15 and 17 February 1954. The project, ordered by the Soviet construction staff in Werder, consisted of two construction stages of which only the first stage was actually discussed, while only assumptions were voiced about the second stage. The first construction stage involved the putting into operation of the dismantled Bifleben-Warza railroad line toward Wolfsbehringen, for a length of 14 km, i.e. approximately as far as Friedrichswerth; and the laying of a 5-km-long railroad line in the Haina area. Mention was made that the second construction stage was to include the construction of an airfield with concrete lanes. Source learned in the Bauunion that a fighter airfield was to be established.
2. Herr Zoennechen (fnu) was assigned as construction superintendent at the new construction site near Gotha; his deputy was Herr Lehmann (fnu). Zoennechen and Lehmann had previously been employed at Drewitz airfield where underground construction work was completed. They were considered as very good experts of the Bauunion. The construction staff was temporarily quartered in an inn in Warza and allegedly would change quarters in accordance with the progress on the railroad line.
3. Work was scheduled to be started by 200 workers in March 1954. On each following month, an additional 200 workers were to be employed; thus by the end of July a total work force of 1,000 would be reached. This plan, however, was changed by the Soviet construction staff in Werder who desired that 400 workers should be employed by March, thus reaching the total work force of 1,000 men by the end of June 1954.
4. At the beginning, a first instalment of 1.3 million eastmarks was allotted. This sum, at the end of 1954, was to be charged to the monthly allocations beginning March 1954. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior allotted a sum of 500,000 eastmarks for the fiscal year of 1955. This measure resulted from the fact

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that the Bauunion Sued had not been informed in time about the construction project to include financial demands in the 1954 budget. The Soviet construction staff in Werder, however, ordered that construction work be started on 1 March 1954.

5. As to the procurement of rails the first difficulties arose inasmuch as new rails could not be obtained. Therefore, rail sections of a length of up to 30 cm had to be welded together.

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Comment. The present report on an intended construction project near Gotha, though received for the first time, is considered probable as the Soviet construction staff in Werder reportedly gave the construction order to the Bauunion Sued which employs construction experts in airfield construction work. It is believed that an airfield in the Haina area, about 15 km west-northwest of Gotha, is to be constructed.

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